

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY CAIRO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1830

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E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR MASS SA EG US IR

SUBJ: TRAINING FOR EGYPTIAN PILOTS

REF: (A) STATE 083920, (B) STATE 075048 (RPTG TEHRAN 3130)

1. I AM SOMEWHAT SUSPICIOUS OF GENERAL TOUFANIAN'S STATEMENT REPORTED REFTEL B. IT DOES NOT JIBE WITH SITUATION AS WE UNDERSTAND IT HERE.

(A) FIRST, WHATEVER ASHRAF MARWAN'S PAST ROLE MAY HAVE BEEN IN ARRANGING FOR IRANIAN TRAINING OF EGYPTIAN PILOTS'S HE IS NO LONGER SADAT'S SECRETARY FOR EXTERNAL CONTACTS. INSTEAD, HIS PRESENT JOB IS HEAD OF THE ARAB ORGANIZATION FOR INDUSTRY, WHICH IS NOT RPT NOT CONCERNED WITH TRAINING EGYPTIAN PILOTS OR ANYTHING ELSE.

(B) SECOND, WHEN TALKING TO GAMASY A FEW DAYS AGO ON ANOTHER MATTER, HE MENTIONED OUR EARLIER APPROACH THE THE EGYPTIANS TO STOP F-5 PILOT TRAINING IN BOTH IRAN AND SAUDI ARABIA. AS A RESULT OF THAT APPROACH, SADAT HAD INITIALLY INSTRUCTED HIM TO DO SO. IN THE CASE OF SAUDI ARABIA, THERE WAS A PROBLEM, SINCE THE EGYPTIAN PILOTS WERE ALREADY THERE. TO WITHDRAW THEM, GAMASY HAD POINTED OUT TO SADAT, WOULD CAUSE GRAVE MORALE PROBLEMS IN THE AIRFORCE. SADAT HAD THEREUPON ALTERED HIS ORDERS. TRAINING HAD BEEN TEMPORARILY SUSPENDED AND EGYPTIAN PILOTSWERE SENT AROUND THE COUNTRY. THEY NOW CONTINUE

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TO RECEIVE F-5 TRAINING FROM SAUDI INSTRUCTORS. IN

THE CASE OF IRAN , THE SIX PILOTS WHO WERE AT THAT TIME SCHEDULED TO GO, HAD NOT RPT NOT YET DEPARTED. HENCE, ACCORDING TO GAMASY, THEY WERE NOT SENT. GAMASY GAVE NO INDICATION OF ANY IMMINENT PLAN TO SEND EGYPTIAN PILOTS TO IRAN FOR TRAINING.

2. NEVERTHELESS, IN LIGHT OF INSTRUCTIONS CONTAINED REFTTEL A, I RAISED MATTER WITH VP MUBARAK TODAY. MUBARAK INSISTED THERE HAS BEEN NO FURTHER EGYTPAIN REQUEST TO IRAN FOR PILOT TRAINING ON F-4'S AND 5'S. HOWEVER, EGYPT HAS ASKED IRANIANS TO TRAIN SOME EGYPTIAN PILOTS ON C-130'S, SINCE IT HOPES SOON TO ACQUIRE THIS AIRCRAFT.

3. I REMINED MUBARAK OF OUR EARLIER CONVERSATION ON TRAINING IN SUDI ARABIA. AS HE KNEW, WE ARE STILL IN THE MIDST OF SEEKING TO OBTAIN APPROVAL FOR THE SALE OF C-130'S. THE ISSUE REMAINS HIGHLY SENSITIVE AND IRANIAN OR SAUDI TRAINING OF EGYPTIANS ON F-4, F-5 OR C-130 AIRCRAFT COULD GIVE OPPONENTS OPPORUTNITY TO CLAIM DECISION HAD ALREADY BEEN AMDE TO PROVIDE SUCH AIRCRAFT TO EGYPT. I WOULD UNDER-MINE CREDIBILITY OF OUR RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS DURING CONGRESSIONAL HEARINGS THAT THIS IS NOT THE CASE. IN ANY EVENT, WE HAVE IN MIND WORKING OUT WTH GOE NEEDE TRAINING ARRANGEMENTS FOR C-130'S IN COONECTION WITH SALE. SHOULD IRAN NOW PROVIDE TRAINING ON THE THREE TYPES OF AIRCRAFT IN QUESTION, IT WOULD POSE REAL PROBLEMS FOR IRAN, ALTHOUGH ULTIMATELY SOME TRAINING ON C-130'S MIGHT NO LONGERHAVE THE POLITICAL IMPLICATIONS IT NOW HAS. WE PLAN TO SO INFORM THE IRANIANS, BUT WISHED FIRST TO TALK WITH GOE ABOUT THE MATTER.

4. MUBARAK AGAIN INSISTED RECENT EGYPTIAN REQUEST APPLIES ONLY TO C-130 TRAINING.IN THIS CONNECTION, HE EXPLAINED THAT IRAN WILL DO SUCH TRAINING FREE OF CHARGE. THIS IS IMPORTANT TO EGYPT WHICH,AS WE KNOW, IS SHORT OF CASH AND WILL HAVE TO OBTAIN FROM SAUDI THE MONEY FOR THE C-130'S. IF WE, TOO, COULD PROVIDE TRAINING FREE OF CHARGE, GOE WOULD OF COURSE BE
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PLEASED. I TOLD HIM IT DID NOT THINK THIS WAS POSSIBLE SINCE TRAINING WILL HAVE TO BE INCLUDED IN THE COSTS.

5. UBARAK NOTED THE C-130 ISSUE IS STILL BEFORE THE CONGRESS. IT WAS HIS UNDERSTANDING CONGRESSIONAL ACTION SHOULD BE COMPLETED IN ABOUT 10 DAYS OR SO. EGYPTIAN PILOTS FOR THE C-130'S CANNOT IN ANY CASE, GO TO IRAN FOR AT LEAST THREE WEEKS OR SO. BY THEN,

HE OPINED, THE IMMEDIATE POLITICAL PROBLEM OUGHT TO HAVE BEEN RESOLVED. HE HOPED SUCHAN ARRANGEMENT MIGHT BE AGREEABLE TO US. EGYPT IS ANXIOUS TO MOVE AHEAD ASAP ON PILOT TRAINING FOR THE C-130'S. HE INDICATED HIS UNDERSTANDING THAT THEREARE AMERIDAN ADVISORS IN IRAN ASSISTING IN C-130 PROGRAM. TOLD HIM I WOULD REPPORT HIS SUGGESTION, BUT ASKED THAT NO EGYPTIAN PILOTS BE SENT TO IRAN WITHOUT FIRST CONSULTING WITH US AGAIN.

6. COMMENT: IF MUBARAK IS RIGHT, AND I HAVE NO REASON TO DISBEILEVE HIM, THE EGYPTIAN REQUEST TO IRAN IS CONSIDERABLY LESS THAN TOUFANIAN CLAIMED. DEPT BEST ABLE TO JUDGE CURRENT STATUS OF C-130 DELIBERATIONS BEFORE THE CONGRESS AND LIKELIHOOD OF EARLY APPROVAL. IF CHANCES LOOK GOOD, I SHOULD THINK WE OUGHT TO BE WILLING TO GO ALONG WITH EGYPTIAN SUGGESTION TO HAVE IRAN BEGIN TRAINING SOME C-130 PILOTS FREE OF CHARGE BEGINNING IN, SAY, MAY UNLESS THERE ARE TECHNICAL CONSIDERATIONS WHICH MAKE THIS UNDERSIRABLE. I WOULD HOPE GUIDANCE TO TEHRAN MIGHT BE ALTERED TO REFLECT THE ABOVE.

7. SUGGEST DEPT PASS THIS MESSAGE TO TEHRAN AND JIDDA.
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